

Cosburn Middle School

Advisory Council Constitution

1.0 Governance

The proceedings of the Cosburn Middle School Advisory Council shall be governed by the Toronto District School Board Policy/Procedure C8.001 and the Ministry of Education Regulations 612.

2.0 Name

The school council at Cosburn Middle School shall be called the Cosburn Middle School Advisory Council (herein known as The Council).

3.0 Membership

- 3.1** All parents/guardians of students at Cosburn Middle School are Council members at large, from which the 15 executive members are elected to represent them.
- 3.2** The majority of school council members must be parents/guardians of pupils enrolled in the school. *(Reg. 612/3.4 & 4.1)*
- 3.3** Board employees who work at their child's school are not eligible for election as school council parent members in that school. *(Reg. 612/3.5, 4.2)*
- 3.4** Board employees who stand for school council election as parent members in their child's school (where they do not work), must disclose their employment with the board. *(Reg. 612/3.5, 4.2)*
- 3.5** Board employees are not eligible to be Chair(s) or Vice-Chair of any school council in that Board. *(Reg. 612/8.3)*
- 3.6** A school trustee is not eligible to be a member of a school council. *(Reg. 612/3.6)*
- 3.7** Sub-committees may include non-elected members of the school community and must include at least one parent member of the school council. *(Reg. 612/13.2-3)*
- 3.8** Membership of The Council shall include at least:
 - The school principal.
 - Parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school (the parents must form the majority of council members and the parents can not be employed in the school).
 - 2 students that will be appointed by the school to attend the meetings.
 - A teacher.
 - An employee of the Board in the school, other than the principal, vice principal(s) or teacher (herein known as the support staff member).
 - The minimum of one and maximum of two community representatives.
- 3.9** The maximum size of The Council shall be 15 parents, 2 students, the maximum of 2 community members, 2 staff members and the Principal.
- 3.10** If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions (i.e. 15 parent members), the candidates shall be acclaimed.

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4.0 Elections

4.1 Election of Parent Members:

- 4.1.1** An election of parent members shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair of the school council, after consulting with the principal of the school.
- 4.1.2** At least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, the principal shall give a written notice of the date, time and location of the election, on behalf of The Council, to every parent/guardian of a pupil, who on the date of the notice, is enrolled in the school.
- 4.1.3** The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.

4.2 Election of the Teacher:

- 4.2.1** The teacher shall be elected by the teachers of the school within the first 30 days of the school year.

4.3 Election of the Support Staff:

- 4.3.1** The support staff member shall be elected by the other support staff members of the school within the first 30 days of the school.

4.4 Selection of the Community Representative(s):

- 4.4.1** The elected parents of The Council shall nominate the community representative(s) and The Council shall vote for appointing the community representative(s).
- 4.4.2** The community representative(s) may not be employed by the Toronto District School Board. The community representative(s)' nature of employment must be disclosed to The Council.

5.0 Term of Office

A person elected or appointed to The Council shall hold office from the date of her/his election until the date of the first meeting in the subsequent school year. A member of The Council may be re-elected or re-appointed in subsequent school years, as long as they qualify as per this constitution.

6.0 Voting

- 6.1** Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the school in the current year is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the Council.
- 6.2** Each executive council member, with the exception of the principal, is entitled to one vote in votes taken within The Council.
- 6.3** The principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by The Council or by a committee of The Council.

7.0 Election of Executive Officers

7.1 The Executive Officers of The Council shall include:

- Chair/Co-Chairs
- Vice-Chair (if there are no co-chairs)
- Secretary
- Treasurer

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These executive officers must be parents or legal guardians of children in the school.

- 7.2 At the first meeting of the elected Council each school year, the Executive Officers shall be elected by and from the elected parent/guardian members of The Council.
- 7.3 The principal shall conduct the annual election of the Executive Officers. If required, a secret ballot will be used to determine the elected executive officers.

8.0 Meetings

- 8.1 All Council meetings are public meetings.
- 8.2 The Council shall meet at least 5 times per the school year according to the schedule that the elected council members set and agree upon with the exception of months where there are extended breaks or holidays like Christmas Break, March Break and Ramadan.
- 8.3 Notices of meetings and a schedule of meeting dates should be distributed to all parents and posted on the school's bulletin board, web site, newsletter, etc.
- 8.4 Special meetings may be called by the Chair(s).
- 8.5 The Secretary shall record the proceedings of the meetings. The minutes of the meetings shall be distributed to all Council members in a timely manner. The meeting minutes shall be also published on the school's web site for review by everyone after being approved by The Council in the next meeting.
- 8.6 The Council shall operate in a co-operative manner, using informal discussion and consensus building as the manner for developing recommendations and plans of actions.

9.0 Public Communication

- 9.1 The Chair(s) is/are the official spokesperson(s) of The Council. The Council can request the principal to inform the general parent/guardian population of the school when decisions have been made which would affect the whole school.
- 9.2 The Council shall inform the school community annually of:
 - i. The names of elected and appointed members.
 - ii. The dates of all general or special meetings of The Council (if the year's schedule has been established).
 - iii. The mandate and operating procedures of The Council.
 - iv. A report summarizing the work of The Council including major decisions or achievements.
- 9.3 The Council shall inform the school community on an ongoing basis of:
 - i. Notices, agenda items and minutes of meetings (posted on the school's bulletin board and the school's web site).
 - ii. Any change in meeting dates.
 - iii. Decisions or recommendations of The Council, and of the TDSB where relevant.
 - iv. Dates of TDSB meetings and Ward Forum meetings.

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- v. Where necessary and possible, school council's communications should be translated by the school into the primary languages of the local school community.

10.0 Role of the Chair/Co-Chairs

- 10.1** Provide leadership to the Cosburn Middle School Advisory Council.
- 10.2** Chair all Council meetings.
- 10.3** Prepare a written agenda in consultation with the principal for distribution to all Council members prior to the meeting.
- 10.4** Ensure that minutes of council meetings are recorded and maintained.
- 10.5** Meet with the principal, as required, to discuss the forthcoming meetings and any important issues which impact the students of the school.
- 10.6** Encourage consensus among School Council members and facilitate the resolution of conflict.
- 10.7** Be the spokesperson for the Council, expressing the consensus which has been reached by the Council.
- 10.8** Monitor, with the principal, the implementation of the Council's plans of action.
- 10.9** Participate in information and training programs.
- 10.10** Ensure that there is regular communication with the school community.
- 10.11** Consult with senior board staff and trustees, as required.
- 10.12** Establish committees when deemed advisable.

10.0 Role of the Vice-Chair (if there are no Co-Chairs)

- 10.1** Chairs the meetings in the absence of the Chair.
- 10.2** Assists the Chair as required.

11.0 Role of the Secretary

- 11.1** Maintain complete records of all meetings in a timely manner.
- 11.2** Make note of any actions that arise from the Council meetings and identify the responsible individual(s) for each action.
- 11.3** Distribute the minutes to the Chair(s), Vice-Chair and the Principal.

12.0 Role of the Treasurer

- 12.1** Maintain financial records of the Council.
- 12.2** Communicate with the School Budget secretary, to ensure any Council bills have been paid through the Council line-item in the school's budget.
- 12.3** Submit a year-end financial statement to the Council.
- 12.4** Maintain standard reporting and accounting procedures.

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13.0 Role of the Council Members

- 13.1** Participate in all Council meetings.
- 13.2** Participate in information and training programs, provided by the Toronto District School Board.
- 13.3** Act as a link between the Council and the community.
- 13.4** Seek out and represent the broad opinions and ideas of the school community during Council discussions.
- 13.5** Encourage the participation of all parents and staff in providing input to the Council.
- 13.6** Vote on items presented by the Council or its members.
- 13.7** Any time the School Council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency or company, and a school council representative has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that school council representative shall declare a conflict of interest and shall not discuss or vote on any such resolution relating to the matter.

14.0 Members at Large

- 14.1** Items 1-5 under the role of Council Members will be the same for Members at Large.
- 14.2** Members at large will not be eligible to vote on items presented by Council or its members.

15.0 Role of the Principal

- 15.1** Take responsibility for the organization and election of the Council.
- 15.2** Facilitate and assist in the operation of the School Council.
- 15.3** Assist, advise, co-operate and consult with the School Council as it works towards achieving its goals and purposes.
- 15.4** Support and promote the Council's activities.
- 15.5** Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility and respond in a timely fashion.
- 15.6** Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies, and collective agreements.
- 15.7** Disseminate the training materials provided by the TDSB and the Ministry of Education.
- 15.8** Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions.
- 15.9** Communicate with the chair(s) of the Council on a regular basis.
- 15.10** Ensure that copies of the minutes of the Council's meetings are kept at the school and are available to the local community.
- 15.11** Assist the Council in communicating with the school community.
- 15.12** Maintain the authority, responsibilities and obligations of the principalship as mandated by Board policy, and the Education Act and Regulations of the Province of Ontario.

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16.0 Attendance

- 16.1** In many cases, the member may not be aware that his/her continued absence is affecting the Council's ability to carry out its mandate under the regulation. On being aware of this consequence, the member may be willing to make regular attendance a priority. In other cases, the individual may decide to resign from the Council, thereby creating a vacancy in its membership.
- 16.2** A motion could be forwarded by an executive member with a seconder to vote on asking another executive council member to resign from the executive membership of the Council in case of this member's failure to attend two consecutive council meetings without a valid reason.

17.0 Vacancies

- 17.1** A vacancy in the Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.
- 17.2** If a position is or becomes vacant during the School Council year, the Council can decide whether to post and elect nominations at the next Council meeting or choose to operate with vacancies, unless the parent/guardian majority on the Council is not maintained.

18.0 Conflict of Interest

- 18.1** A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential.
- 18.2** A school council member should excuse himself/herself from discussions and voting on matters in which a Conflict of Interest is likely to result.
- 18.3** A school council member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

19.0 Amendments to the Constitution

- 19.1** The provisions of the constitution, which are not governed by Board or Ministry policy or regulation, shall be changed by two thirds (2/3) or greater majority vote of the elected executive members of the Council.
- 19.2** Notice of amendments to the constitution should be given at least 30 days prior to the vote.

20.0 Quorum for the Council Meeting

- 20.1** A quorum shall be 25% of the elected members (rounded down), with a minimum of 3 elected members, whichever is greater.

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21.0 Annual Report

- 21.1** The Council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the principal.
- 21.2** If the Council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report of these activities.
- 21.3** The principal shall, on behalf of the Council, give a copy of the report to every parent of a pupil who, on the date of the report, is enrolled in the school.